COLLINS·COCKRUM·HECK

BATMAN

THE NEW ADVENTURES

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INTRODUCING... THE MIME! TM

K-WILLIAM

WHO watches the WATCHMEN?

"THE SOUND OF SILENCE"

MAX ALLAN COLLINS · DAVE COCKRUM · DON HECK · AGUSTIN MAS · ADRIENNE ROY · DENNY O'NEIL
SCRIPT PENCILS INKER LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR

NO NIGHT IN GOTHAM IS ROUTINE. NO NIGHT PATROL, FOR GOTHAM'S DARK KNIGHT, IS UNEVENTFUL.

AND SATURDAY NIGHT IS THE LONGEST, THE WILDEST, THE MOST EVENTFUL--SO, AS DARK NIGHT GIVES WAY TO MORNING LIGHT, AS SATURDAY BLURS INTO SUNDAY, BATMAN AND ROBIN--WEARY FROM THE WARS--HEAD HOME.

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YET, THERE IS A RITUAL THE BATMAN OBSERVES--A RITUAL OBSERVED BUT ONCE A WEEK AS SATURDAY NIGHT TURNS SLOWLY INTO A DAWNING SUNDAY--

A MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION, OF MEDITATION, IN A LIFE OF VIOLENCE...

I'M BEAT, BATMAN! SQUELCHING THAT DRUG BUY TOOK IT OUTTA ME--

IT TOOK MORE OUT OF THOSE DEALERS, THOUGH, DIDN'T IT?

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF, WELL... RELIGIOUS?

IT'S BEEN SAID I HAVE AN OLD TESTAMENT OUTLOOK--

I WAS JUST WONDERING. I MEAN, EVERY WEEK, SIX A.M. SUNDAY, WE STOP TO LISTEN TO THE BELLS OF ST. MARTIN'S CATHEDRAL.

"MAYBE I JUST LIKE THE SOUND OF THEM."

WHAT SOUND? IT'S AFTER SIX--AND I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING!

COME ON, ROBIN.

IT'S THE *ODDEST* THING, BATMAN-- AND SO *DISTURBING*--THIS BELL HAS RUNG EVERY SUNDAY FOR A HUNDRED *YEARS!*

YET IT'S *SILENT* THIS MORNING, FATHER. *WHY?*

I HAVEN'T A *CLUE.*

IT'S *SIMPLE,* FATHER--

SOMEBODY *COPPED* THE *CLAPPER!*

THINK THIS CASE IS *BIG ENOUGH* FOR US, BATMAN? "THE COPPED CLAPPER CAPER"?

IT'S NOT *FUNNY,* ROBIN--

ANYBODY WHO WOULD STEAL FROM A *CHURCH...*

BATMAN, LOOK!

"THE BAT-SIGNAL--IT'S BARELY VISIBLE, WITH THE SUN STARTIN' TO COME OUT!"

IT'S *UNUSUAL* FOR THE COMMISSIONER TO CALL US IN THIS *LATE*, ROBIN--

YOU MEAN THIS *EARLY*, DON'T YOU?

BATMAN, I *HOPED* TO CATCH YOU BEFORE YOU ENDED YOUR NIGHT PATROL--WE HAVE AN *UNUSUAL* SITUATION...

IT CAN HARDLY BE ANY *MORE* UNUSUAL THAN WHAT *WE* JUST ENCOUNTERED--

YEAH! SOME BOZO BOOSTED THE *BONGER* OUT OF A CHURCH BELL!

VERY ALLITERATIVE, ROBIN--AND *EXACTLY* THE PROBLEM I WISHED TO CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION.

"IDENTICAL ACTS OF VANDALISM HAVE BEEN COMMITED CITYWIDE! CHURCHES AND CATHEDRALS HAVE REPORTED SUCH THEFTS ALL AROUND GREATER GOTHAM."

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CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

AND ON THIS SUNDAY MORNING, A FOGLIKE PALL SETTLES ITSELF OVER GOTHAM'S CHURCH-GOERS--

WHO, DESPITE REASSURANCES FROM PASTORS--

--CAN'T HELP BUT BE TROUBLED BY THE SOUND OF SILENCE.

BREAKFAST COMES LATE AT THE WAYNE MANSION--EARLY AFTERNOON, IN FACT--BUT THE MORNING REMAINS ON ALFRED'S MIND--

A VERY STRANGE SUNDAY INDEED, SIR. NOT A SINGLE CHURCH BELL TOLLED!

WHY DO YOU THINK THE COMMISSIONER CALLED US IN ON SIMPLE *VANDALISM*?

BECAUSE IT'S NEITHER SIMPLE NOR VANDALISM, JASON.

AND THAT EVENING, IN THE THEATRICAL DISTRICT...

"THE THEFTS WERE SO WIDESPREAD AND WELL-EXECUTED AS TO MAKE THE COMMISSIONER WONDER IF SOME MANIAC MIGHT BE SENDING A MESSAGE TO THE CITY."

SHE'S VERY GOOD.

I HATE MIMES.

DON'T YOU JUST *LOVE* THE "MECHANICAL" PERSON?

NO.

IN A CITY THE SIZE OF GOTHAM, STREET PERFORMERS ARE COMMONPLACE; BUT THE MIME WORKING THIS STREET CORNER, AS THE THEATERS EMPTY OUT, IS NOT COMMONPLACE.

DESPITE THE DISLIKE OF SOME FOR THIS ART FORM, THIS EXPRESSIVE STREET PERFORMER IS WINNING ADMIRATION--AND DOLLARS!

TAXI

BUT ANOTHER COMMON GOTHAM PERFORMANCE IS UNDER WAY IN THE STREET BEHIND HER...

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT, BUD!

HONK! HONK!

I'M GLAD WE DIDN'T BOTHER GETTING OUR CAR. WE'D BE CAUGHT IN THAT TRAFFIC JAM NOW!

HONK!

HONK!

HONK!

HONK!

"FUNNI

WHAT'S WITH HER?

TAXI

POOR DEAR, SHE'S LOST HER CONCENTRATION!

QUIET NIGHT.

NOT SO QUIET...

"AFTER-THEATER TRAFFIC JAM DOWN THERE."

HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HON

GET OUTA MY WAY, YA DUMB BIMBO!

GO BACK TO THE CIRCUS, WHY DONCHA?

JUST MY LUCK! TRAFFIC FINALLY STARTS LETTIN' UP AND THE CLOWN PRINCESS DECIDES TO PLAY TRAFFIC COP IN FRONT'A MY BUGGY!

THUP! THUP!

AXI

GOOD GOD--

AIEEEEE!!

WHAT IS IT? AN ACCIDENT?

IF SO IT'S A *BAD* ONE--THOSE SCREAMS WERE THE SOUND OF *TERROR!*

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

HORRIBLE... HORRIBLE... SHE SHOT HIM!

WHO?

THAT *MIME*...

"I SAW HER RUNNING OFF INTO THE PARK."

STAY HERE AND MAKE SURE THAT CABBIE GETS FIRST AID. MEDICAL HELP MAY BE *SLOW* IN COMING, WITH THIS TRAFFIC SNARL.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

STOP! YOU CAN RUN AGAINST THE *WIND*, BUT NOT AWAY FROM *ME*!

WHOOSSHH

THUNK!

I'VE GOT YOUR BAG OF *TRICKS*, INCLUDING YOUR *SILENCED GUN*. *ANYTHING* ELSE UP YOUR SLEEVE?

HERE--I'LL GIVE YOU A HAND--

ZZZZZTT!!!

SHORTLY...

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHAT--

TAXI

TAXI

THAT MIME WAS *HIRED* AND I DON'T MEAN *EXCITABLE*...

I TOOK *10,000 VOLTS*, EASY. HOW'S THE CABBIE?

ALIVE. SHOULDER WOUND. NEXT TO YOU, *HE* GOT THE BEST LOOK AT HER.

THANKS FOR COMING IN, MR. ITKOWITZ--

DID YOU ROUND UP SOME SUSPECTS?

NOW--DO YOU SEE A FAMILIAR FACE?

EASILY THE MOST IDIOTIC LINE-UP IN HISTORY...

YOU NEVER KNOW. HE OR ONE OF THE OTHER WITNESSES MIGHT'VE RECOGNIZED THE SPECIFIC *MAKE-UP*, THE FACIAL *BONE* STRUCTURE--

UNLIKELY.

OH, I DON'T KNOW. I THINK *I* MAY HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT MIME LAST NIGHT...BUT I WON'T FIND THAT FACE IN YOUR *MUG* BOOKS!

BRUCE! IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

VWC BATMAN: GOTHAM MENACE

YES IT HAS, VICKI-- BUSINESS MATTERS... CHARITABLE CONCERNS...

THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T CALL A GIRL ON THE PHONE NOW AND THEN!

"GIRL"? AREN'T YOU THE DEFINITIVE CAREER WOMAN?

YES-BUT WITH A NIGHT LIFE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR EVENINGS, ANYWAY?

VWC BATMAN- GOTHAM MENACE

ACTUALLY, GETTING INTERESTED IN THEATER AGAIN-- I'VE A NOTION FOR MOUNTING A SHOW...

A SHOW? WHY, IS THERE A MALT SHOP THAT NEEDS SAVING?

NO--BUT AN ART FORM MIGHT I'VE TAKEN AN INTEREST IN MIME--

WELL, TAKE TWO ASPIRIN AND HAVE A LIE-DOWN. I'M *SURE* IT WILL GO *AWAY*!

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE *CAMILLA CAMEO*...

KI VALE
AGING EDITOR

AH YES--I DID A SERIES OF *ARTICLES* ON THE ENIGMATIC MS. CAMEO--

--GOTHAM'S ANSWER TO MARCEL MARCEAU!

"SHE STUDIED WITH HIM, DIDN'T SHE?"

YES, YES... BUT SHE'S *OLD NEWS*--GOTHAM GOT *BORED* WITH HER. BRUCE, THERE'S *NO* COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL IN *MIME*, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD!

COMMERCE ISN'T *EVERYTHING*, VICKI

LOOK, I'LL HAVE THE *FILE* ON HER PULLED FOR YOU... AND BRUCE?

YES?

NEXT TIME YOU DROP BY TO CHECK UP ON A WOMAN--

--MAKE SURE IT'S *ME*!

WHO IS THIS CAMILLA CAMEO?

SHE WAS ONCE WEALTHY OR AT LEAST WELL OFF.

"HER FATHER WAS OSCAR ORTIN, THE SO-CALLED FIREWORKS KING--

"ACCORDING TO VICKI VALE'S ARTICLES, CAMILLA REBELLED AT HER FATHER'S NOISY TRADE--

"SHE GREW UP A TALENTED, THOUGH SPOILED, ONLY CHILD WITH ARTISTIC SENSIBILITIES--"

SHE INHERITED A SMALL FORTUNE, AFTER HER FATHER AND MOTHER PERISHED IN AN EXPLOSION AT THE FIREWORKS FACTORY.

"SHE DEVOTED HERSELF TO HER ARTISTIC BENT--SPECIFICALLY THE SILENT ART KNOWN AS MIME."

AHHH! YUCCH! THAT'S THE WORST THING THERE IS!

THERE ARE THOSE WHO MIGHT AGREE WITH YOU--AND OTHERS WHO WOULDN'T--

"BUT CAMILLA CAMEO--HER STAGE NAME--ABHORRING NOISE, FOUND SOLACE IN SILENCE.

"SHE STUDIED OVERSEAS FOR YEARS AND RETURNED A MASTER--SINKING HER MONEY INTO A MIME TROUPE, THE CAMEO COMPANY, WHICH TOURED WIDELY...AT A FINANCIAL LOSS!"

NONETHELESS, CAMILLA WAS SOMETHING OF A SUCCESS, APPEARING WITH HER TROUPE AT THE GOTHAM CIVIC CENTER REGULARLY.

THEN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE CHANGED--GOVERNMENT GRANTS WERE WITHDRAWN--HER FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME WERE UP...

"FUNDING FOR HER PROGRAM CUT, HER OWN RESOURCES EXHAUSTED, CAMILLA DISBANDED HER TROUPE--

AN EVENING OF MIME

CLOSED

"...AND DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT."

YOU THINK SHE'S THE MIME WHO SHOT THAT CABBIE?

I'M CERTAIN OF IT--AND I ALSO THINK SHE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR SILENCING THOSE CHURCH BELLS!

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

OH!

"I THINK I KNOW WHERE SHE IS, ALFRED. AND I THINK I KNOW HOW SHE WILL NEXT EXPRESS HER DISTASTE FOR THE NOISE THAT PERMEATES MODERN LIFE..."

BLISTER TWISTER

SOLD OUT

BLISTER TWISTER

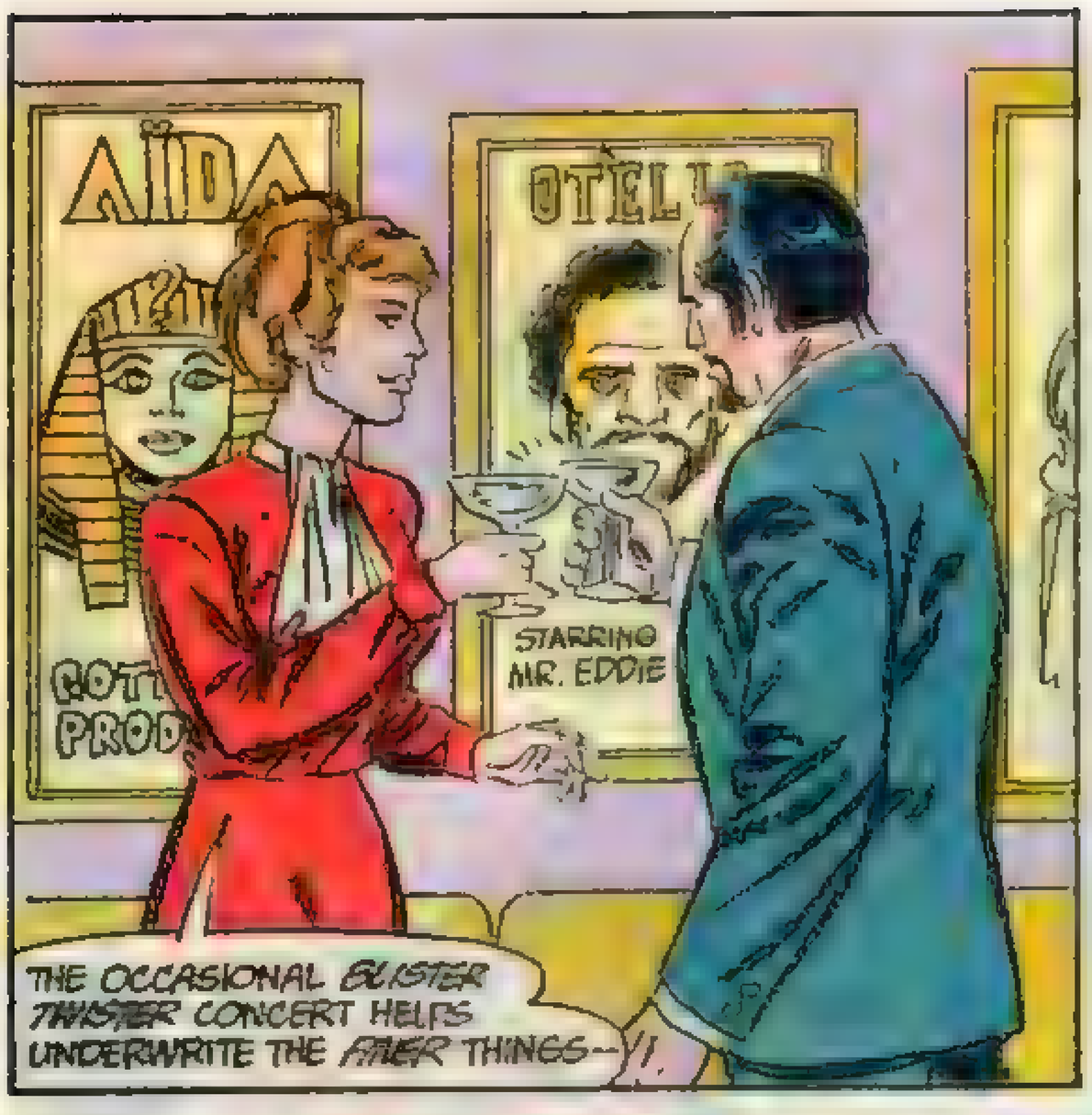
SOLD OUT

I HAVE GRAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT HAVING ALLOWED THIS PERVERSE PERFORMANCE, CYNTHIA!

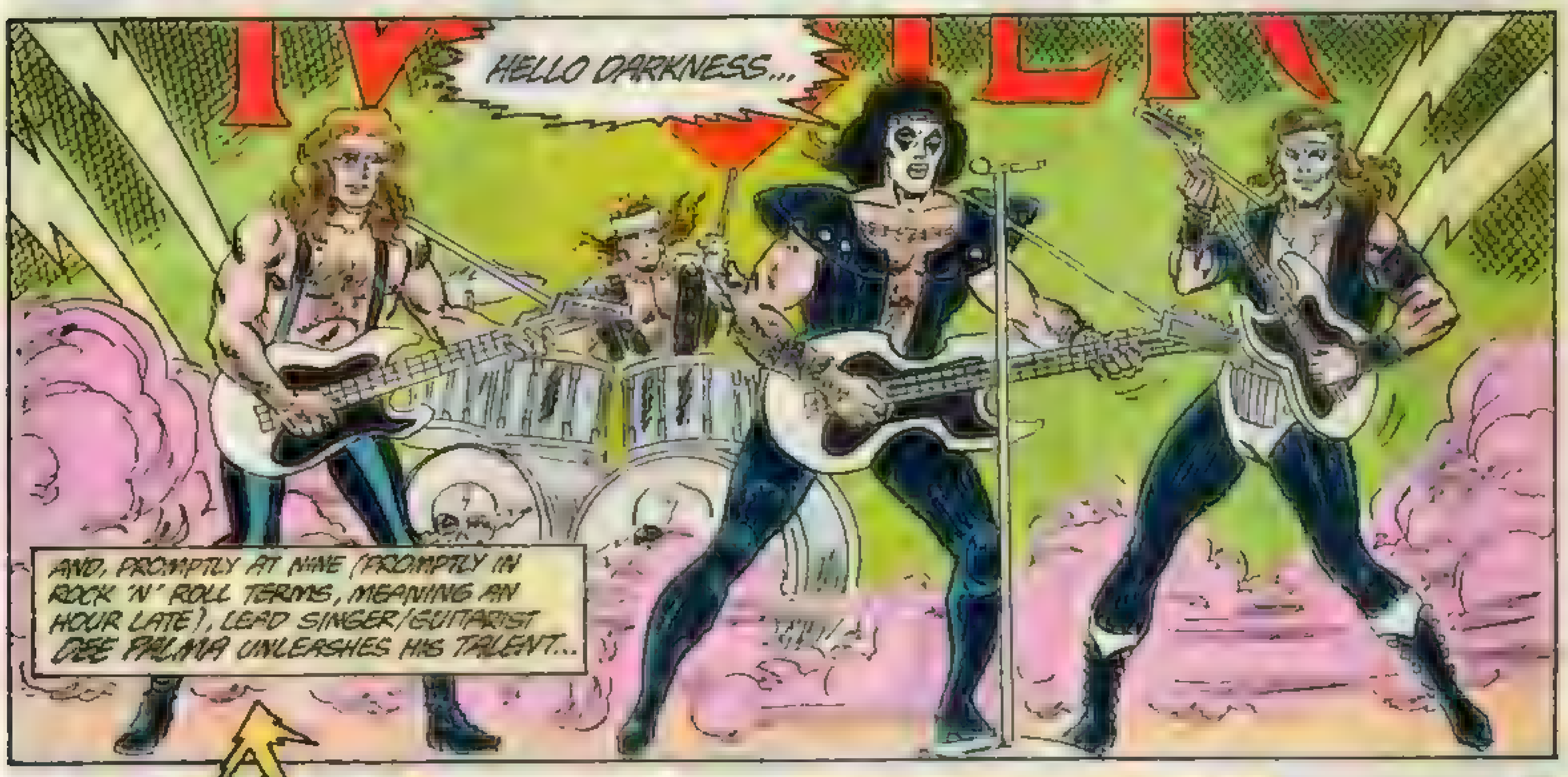
FACE UP TO IT, JEROME!

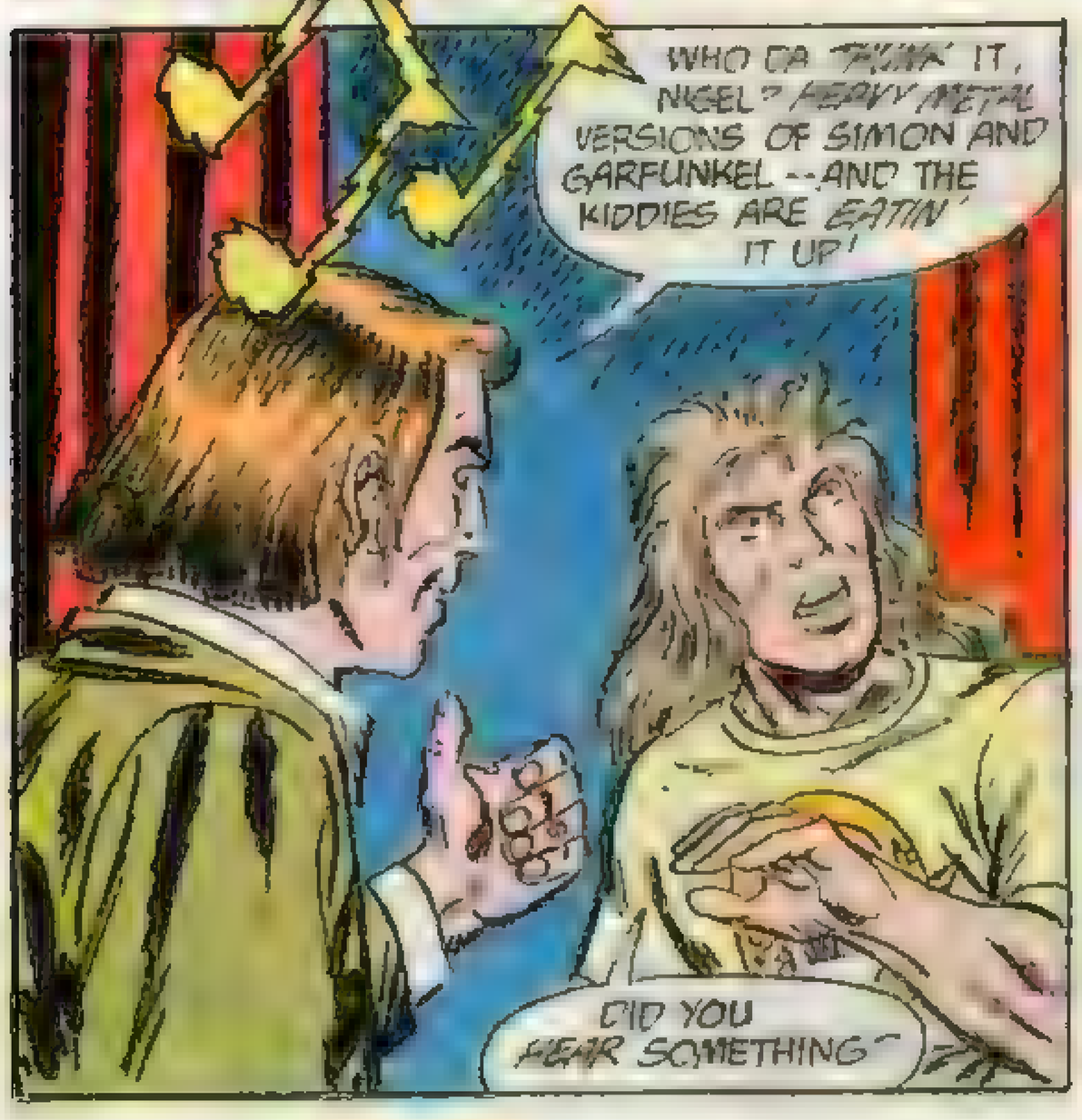
WITH FUNDING SLASHED, THE CIVIC CENTER MUST BECOME AN AVENUE FOR THE OCCASIONAL COMMERCIAL ATTRACTION!

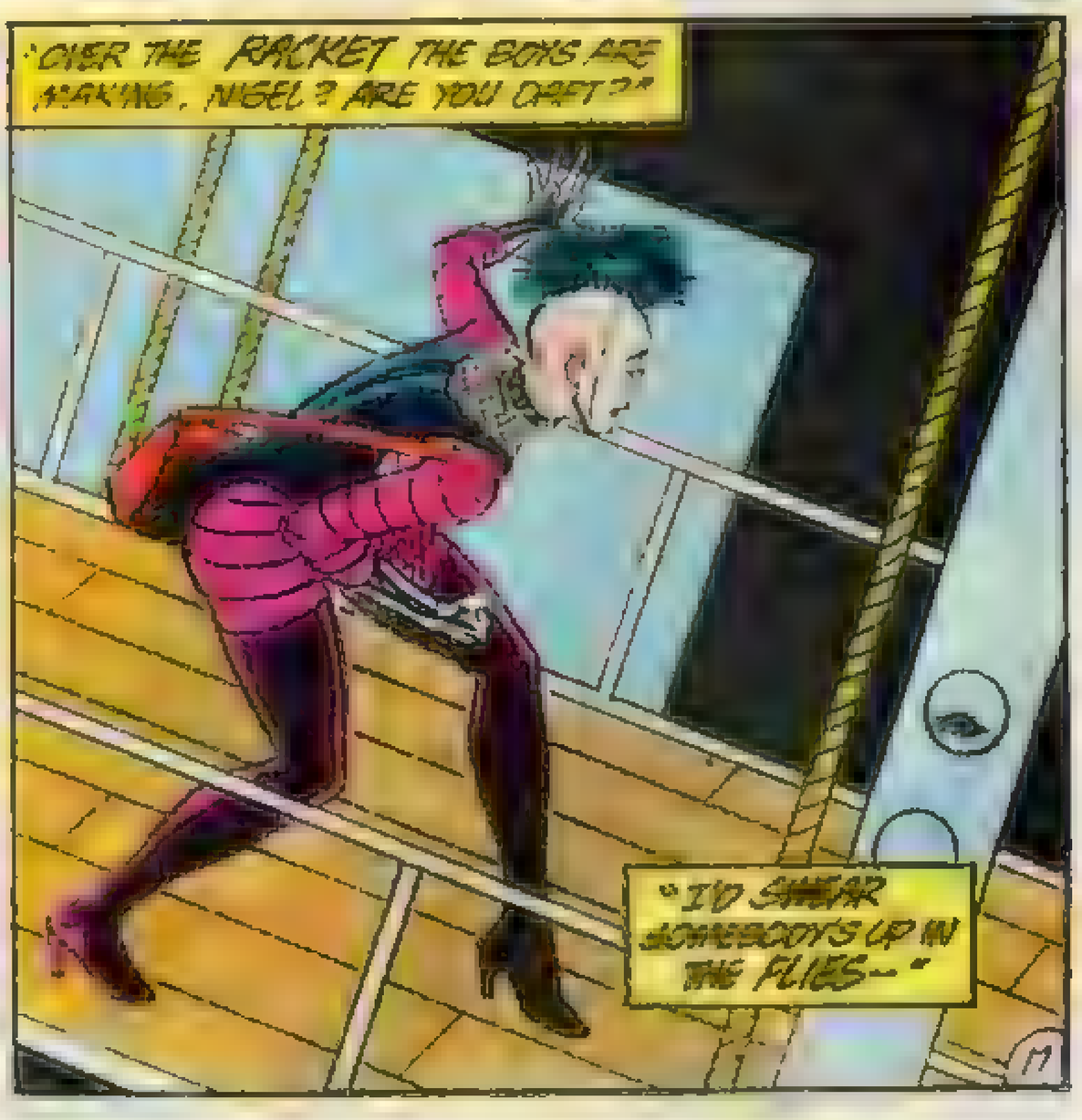
CONTINUED ON 3RD FACE TO COMING


AÏDA
STARRING MR. EDDIE
THE OCCASIONAL BLISTER TWISTER CONCERT HELPS UNDERWRITE THE FINER THINGS--Y'I.

"NOW WHO COULD OBJECT TO THAT?"


HELLO DARKNESS...
AND, PROMPTLY AT NINE (PROMPTLY IN ROCK 'N' ROLL TERMS, MEANING AN HOUR LATE), LEAD SINGER/GUITARIST DEE PALMA UNLEASHES HIS TALENT...


WHO DA FUNK IT, NIGEL? HEAVY METAL VERSIONS OF SIMON AND GARFUNKEL --AND THE KIDDIES ARE EATIN' IT UP!
DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?


"OVER THE RACKET THE BOYS ARE MAKING, NIGEL? ARE YOU DAFT?"
"I'D SWEAR SOMEBODY'S UP IN THE FLIES--"

HUH? WHO CUT THE JUICE?!?

DANGER
STAGE
CIRCUITRY

HEY! WHAT'S THE IDEA --

ZZZZZZZT!!

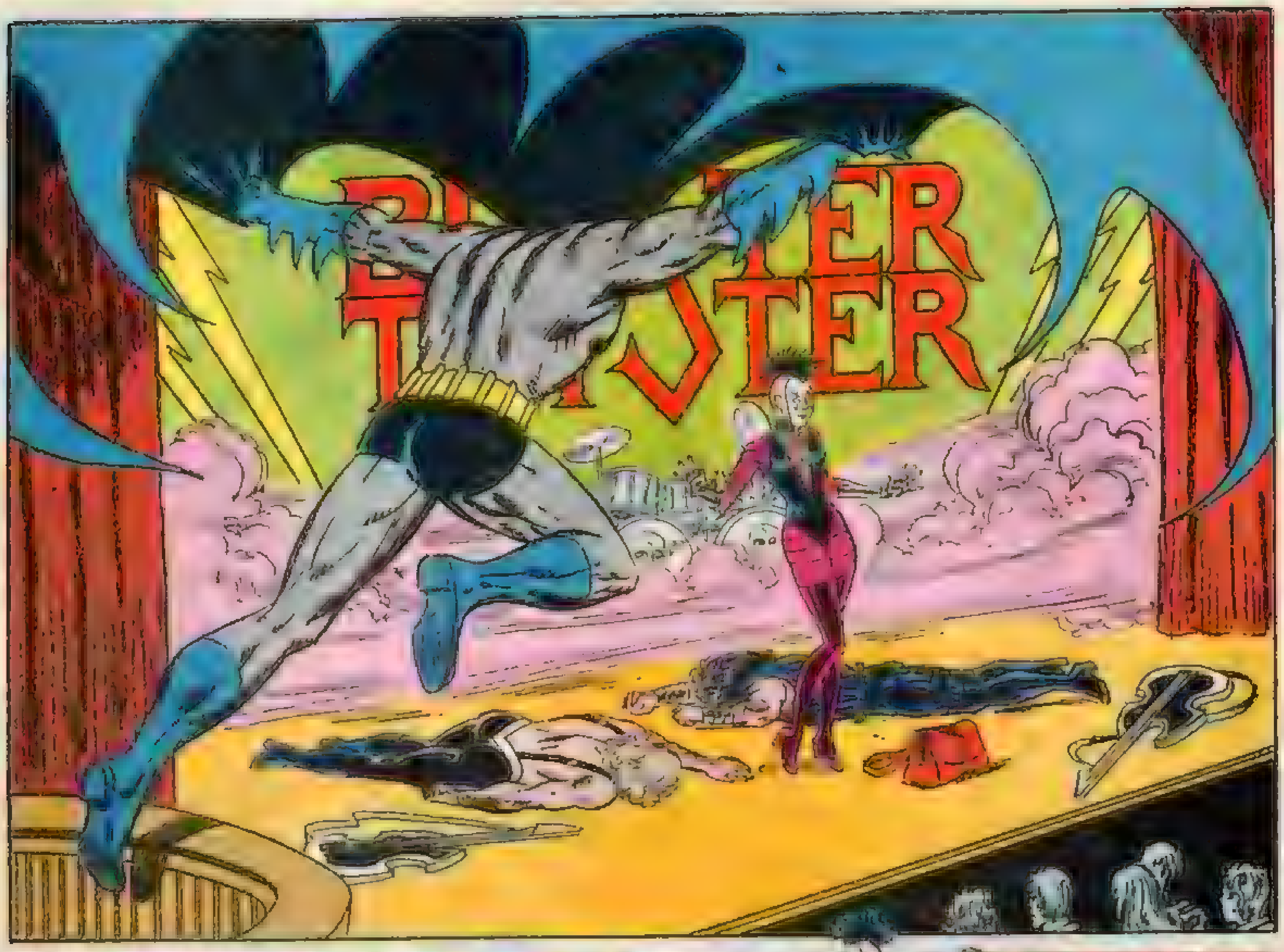
ZZZZT!

ZZZZT!

HEY!

GET OFF THE BLOODY STAGE, Y' BLEEDIN' HARLEQUIIN!

ZZZ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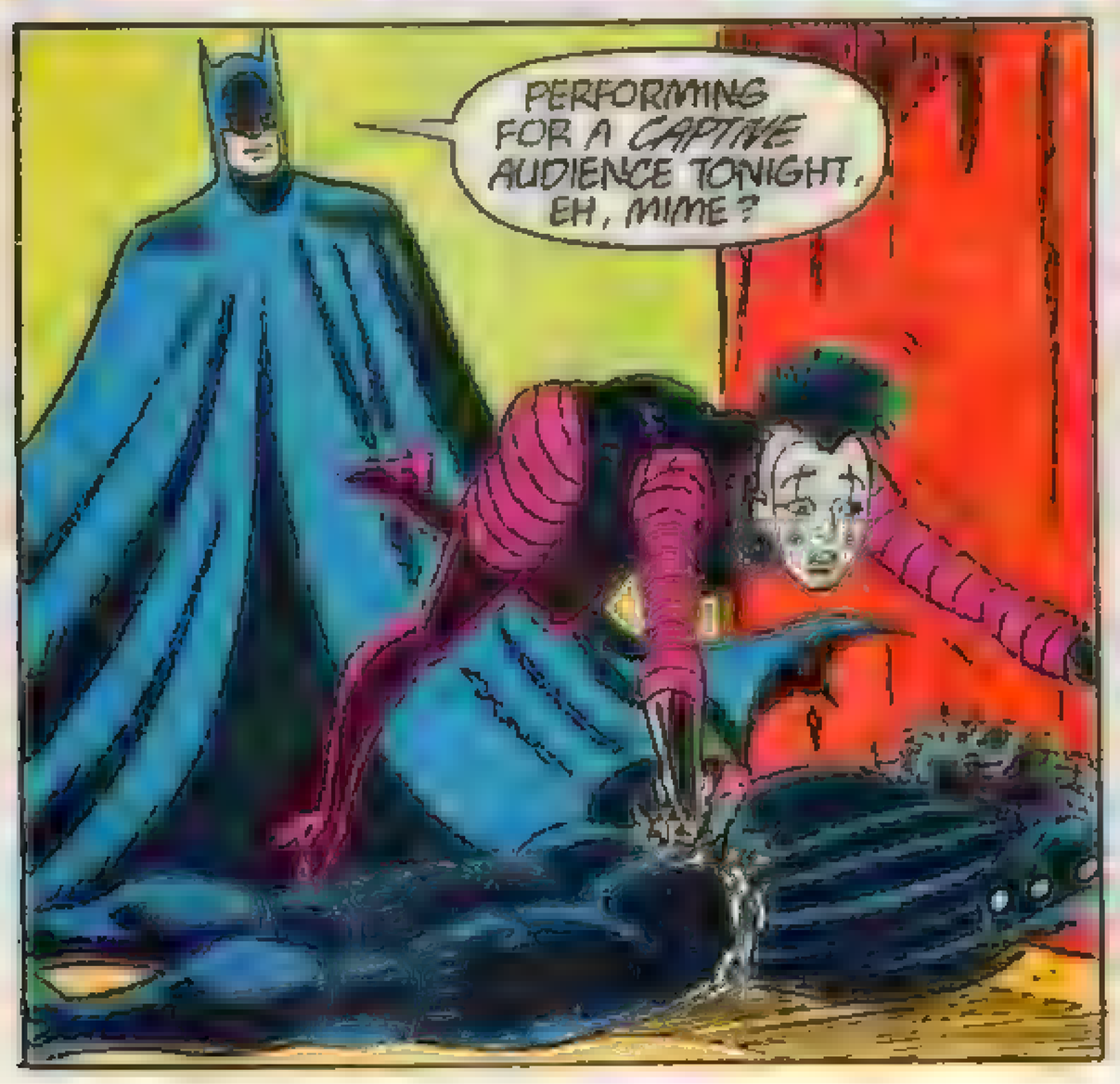
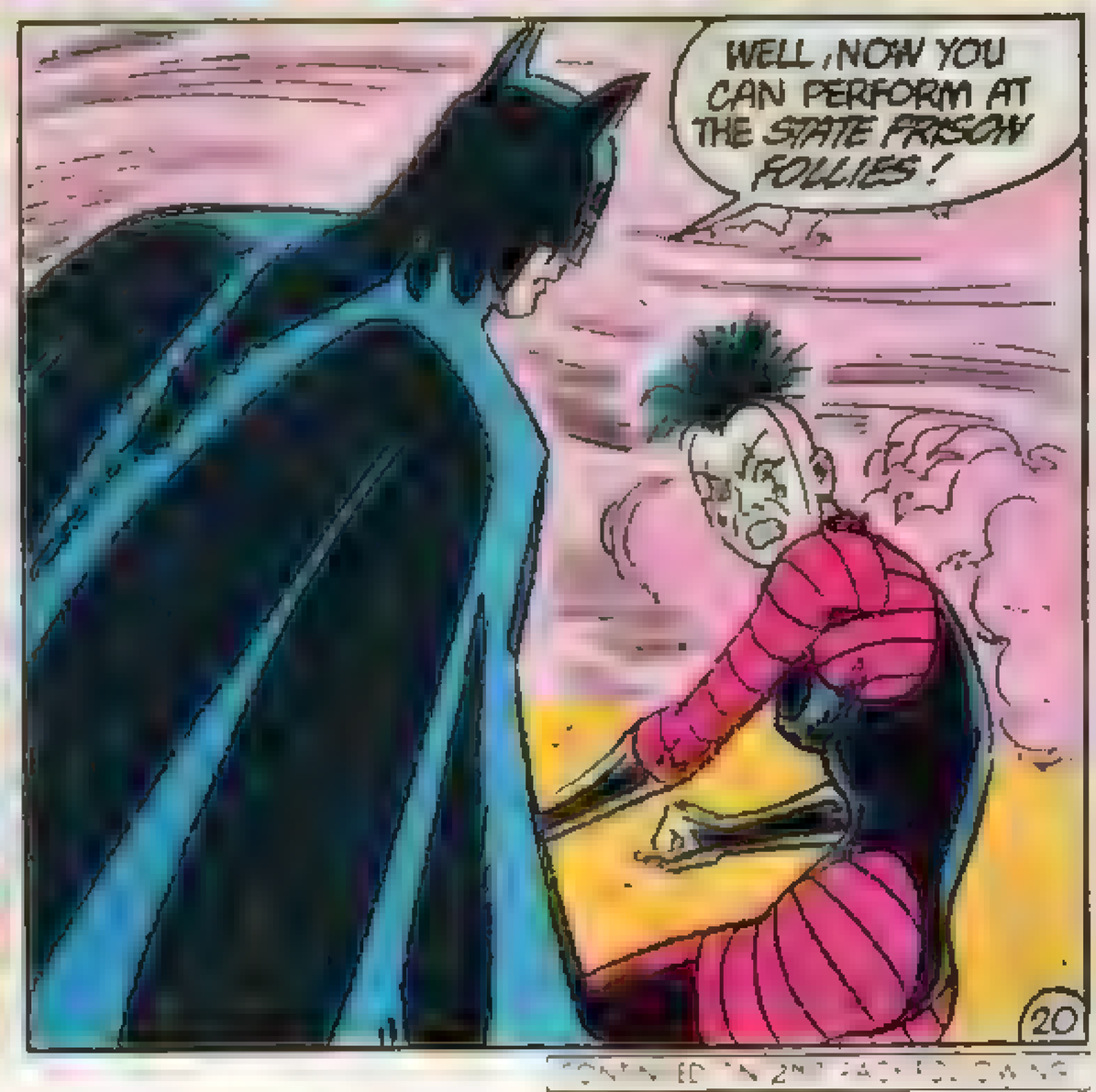

PERFORMING FOR A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE TONIGHT, EH, MIME?


WELL, NOW YOU CAN PERFORM AT THE STATE PRISON FOLLIES!
20

OH, BY THE WAY--I'M FULLY *INSULATED* TONIGHT.

SHOW'S OVER, CAMILLA! LET'S TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU CAN GET SOME PEACE AND QUIET--

ROBIN! HIT IT!

YOU GOT IT!

DANGER
STAGE
CIRCUITRY

SCREE-EEECH!!

GUITAR FEEDBACK RENDS THE AIR--

--AND THE MIME, BENT OVER IN AURAL PAIN, TAKES AN UNPLANNED BOW.

YEAH!

YAY!

THIS IS GREAT!

AND SOON...

HELLO DARKNESS!

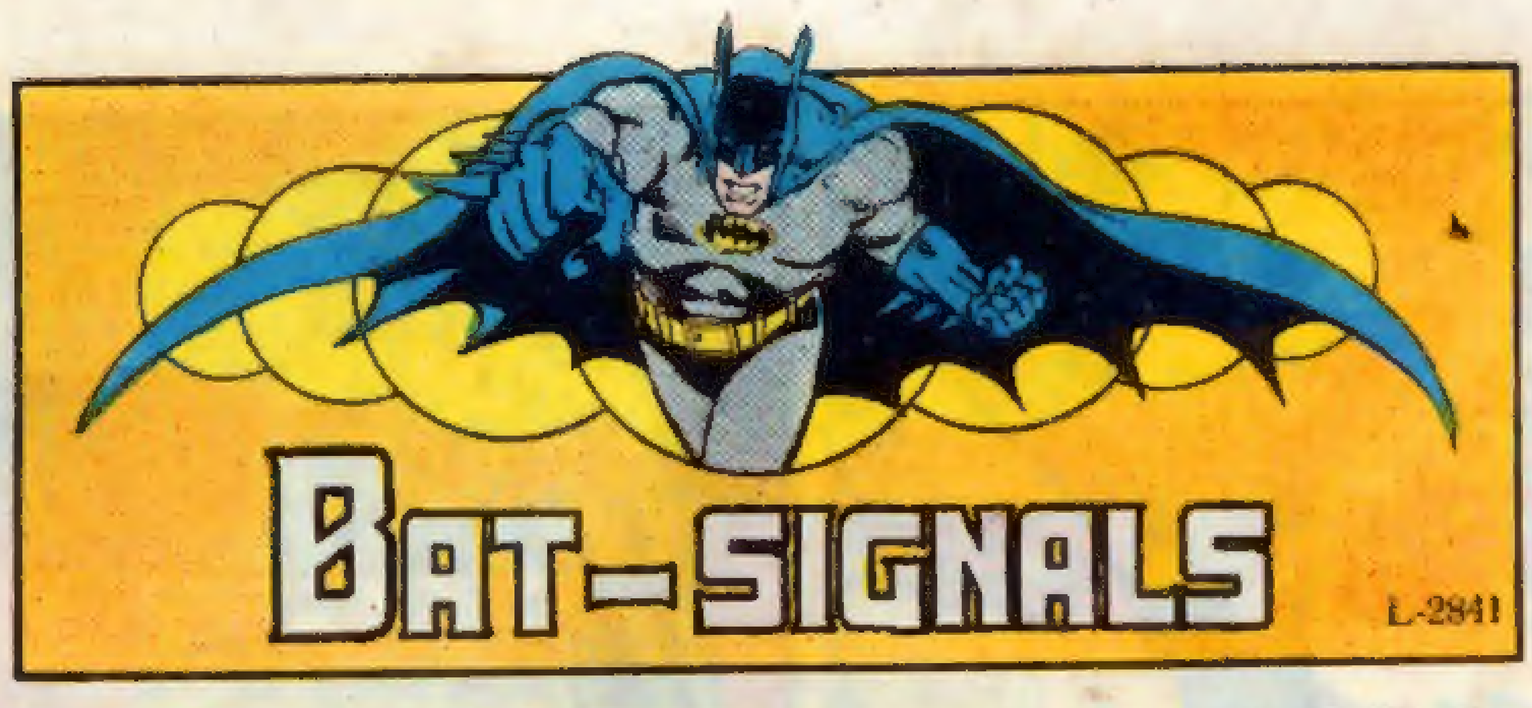
COOL!

I WONDER...

"... IF WE DID THE WORLD A FAVOR?"

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT...

FIN



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Hi there, Bat-fans! My name is Jonathan Peterson and I'll be stepping in to handle the letter column chores while Barbara Randall steps out to pursue some personal, professional writing goals. I know you'll all join me in wishing her the best of luck because she's truly one gifted editor and a heck of a nice person to boot! (Gee, now that I've said such nice things, maybe she'll take me out for pizza at lunch more often!) Okay, that's enough carefree frivolity! Let's get on to what you really want to read, namely your latest letters from our ever-expanding mail-bag...

Dear Bat-People,

I know that you guys are most likely getting a lot of letters concerning BATMAN these days so the chance of getting printed is probably one in a million (Okay, maybe one in a hundred). However, I still wanted to write and tell you that BATMAN #407 was great as usual.

Denny, my friend, your return to the Batman titles is a welcome one. You're great, fabulous and super. Okay, now that I've buttered you up I have a few requests. Have the Dynamic Duo battle Croc again, as I think that he is Batman and Robin's greatest foe. Also, I would like to see Nocturna, Clayface (any of the three), Doctor Phosphorus and the Crime Doctor.

Dean Belanger
8th Street
Mattawa, Ontario P0S 1V0

Well, Dean, you did it. Not only did you beat the odds of getting published, but you're batting .500 on your villains! While there are no immediate plans to bring back either Croc or Nocturna, you can look forward to seeing CLAYFACE III in the upcoming BATMAN ANNUAL #11. He'll be showcased in a special story by Alan Moore and George Freeman. Then, look for the Crime Doctor to be paying a house call courtesy of Mike W. Barr and Norm Breyfogle in DETECTIVE #579.

*****

Dear Denny,

I'm confused. Why is Jason Todd being introduced now, when it was already done in issue #368? Also, having the old Dick Grayson Robin in there makes a complete lack of continuity. The story ignores, with the exception of the middle panel on the top of page 7, his entire past as Nightwing.

Now, enough with the complaints, and on to the praise. Max Allen Collins has written an excellent story. He is one of the few writers (including yourself, Denny), who has been able to capture the true, insane persona of the Joker. Max's portrayal of Batman was also on the mark. Max even made Batman more interesting by endowing him with a sense of humor as evident in the middle panel of page 8. "Inquiring minds want to know." Good Stuff! At this rate, he will become one of the best Batman writers yet!

Chris Warner's pencils on the book were outstanding. His Joker was as good as any done by Adams or Rogers, and his Batman was truly a creature of the night. I have read that this will be Chris's only issue. I hope that this isn't so because he is one of the best BATMAN artists to come along in some time.

Not to be forgotten, Mike DeCarlo's inks complemented Chris's pencils perfectly. A tip of the hat to another job well done!

Keep up the good work. I know that you guys will do your best to keep this DC devotee entertained.

A Bat-fan forever,
David Derton
1881 Skyline Drive
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7R 3J2 CANADA

The reason Jason Todd's origin is being reintroduced, David, is because DC's hit mini-series CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS completely wiped out his earlier origin, namely the one in BATMAN 368. Actually, a few people wrote in expressing their similar confusion over the situation. So, let's set the record straight. The events in BATMAN #408-409 chronicle the one, true, post-CRISIS origin of Jason Todd in Batman continuity. Also, this story takes place about 3 years ago. Thus, we are not denying that Dick Grayson quit being Robin to become Nightwing. It's just that we're not chronicling in depth Dick's decision to leave and his subsequent solo adventures in our current run of stories.

*****

Dear Denny,

"Did Robin Die Tonight?" was a very good start for the Collins/Warner team on BATMAN. However, I now hear that it is also a very good end for the Collins/Warner team, as Chris will no longer be the artist on the book. What happened? I can't believe that anyone was displeased with the excellent job he did. Whatever the reason, it's a great pity, as I had been really impressed with his other recent work (on Doctor Strange and Black Cross) and I was very much looking forward to seeing him on the Dark Knight. Dave Cockrum seems an odd choice as our next Bat-artist, not because I don't like his art, but because I associate him with more colorful characters, as evidenced by his work on the Legion of Super-Heroes, Futurians, etc., rather than a shadowy detective of the night like the Batman. As ever, I'm willing to give it a try.

It's only taken one issue for Max Collins to prove he's going to be a perfectly suited writer for this book. Again, he has a sterling reputation, and has now gotten hold of Batman's character very quickly and astutely, as well as the rest of the cast. Picking up a book like this is not an easy task, and having to follow the Miller/Mazzucchelli team doesn't make it any easier, but there were no problems for the new creative duo.

Chris Warner, as I've already implied, did a great job on the art. Fortunately, quite a few new artists have appeared on the scene recently, and Chris is amongst the best of those. It's difficult to tell how much of the finished look is due to Mike's inks, but they seem to complement Chris's style well. Again, I can only lament the fact that Chris isn't staying on the book.

Take care,
Malcolm Bourne
87 Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood, London
NW2 1HU ENGLAND

*****

Dear Den,

Quick, somebody pinch me as I must be dreaming! Even a loyal fan such as yours truly wouldn't have thought it possible for a magazine to get steadily better each and every month, but BATMAN #408 certainly lived up to my expectations. I can't wait to learn what goodies are in store for me in upcoming issues. Although I was disappointed that the Joker has returned to his murderous ways (page 3, panel 7-yucko!), it is my only complaint in an otherwise perfect story. I'm curious as to how Bruce Wayne will justify making Jason the new Robin after his stern lecture to Dick about the dangers facing young crimefighters. Oh well, if anyone can make it logical, Bats will.

I love the new Jason Todd origin, by the way. His first origin was much too similar to Dick Grayson's and, let's face it guys, it wasn't very original. This latest explanation shows imagination and promises to be a real thriller.

I seem to recall Jason mentioning his criminal father only briefly. I hope that's

not the last we hear of the mysterious Mr. Todd. A gifted writer such as Max Allen Collins could have a field day with a potential storyline like this. Why, it gets my mind boggling just to think about it! Perhaps the missing father will turn up somewhere in the near future and his identity could become the shocker of the year. Jason's dad could battle Bruce Wayne in a bizarre custody fight and then the Batman would ... Hey, this is fun! Can I work for DC Comics when I grow up?

Anne Guerra
Reno, NV

Well, Anne, as you saw in BATMAN #410-411, Jason's father popped up in some old computer files sending poor Jason into an emotional tirade against everyone about him. Will he turn up anywhere else? Only Denny knows for sure. Unfortunately, since he knows I like a good surprise, now he won't even tell me!

As for working at DC Comics professionally, rule number 1 is that you never have to grow up. After all, how else could we manage to bring you such fresh ideas, month after month, without ever losing our youthful vigor?

*****

Dear Denny, Max, Chris, Mike and Co.,

First of all, the art was super. I've never seen Chris Warner's work before so I wasn't sure what to expect, but his work is just beautiful. His art is never sloppy, always realistic, sort of film noir as someone (ahem!) once put it. His Batman is nothing less than terrific (with the Yellow Oval! Yeah!), but a true Batman artist can always be judged on how well he draws the Joker and Alfred. Well, Neal Adams, eat your heart out—you ain't got nothing on Chris Warner. I can't tell you how pleased I am with the art—as an artist myself, I'm very picky. I really like the new Ferrari-style Batmobile, too. I think it's probably closer to what Batman would really drive. Very well done.

Now, on to Max Allen Collins's writing.

I LIKE IT! First of all, his writing of the Joker is just how it should be—demented to the bitter end ("I could shoot you in the face—that would be fun..."). Max's writing of his relationship with the Batman ("But if I shoot Batman, who would I have to play with?") was perfect. I'm also very pleased with the Batman/Robin relationship he's setting up here (I've always liked it when he calls Dick "son") and the little reference to Nightwing was a nice touch on both Collins's and Warner's behalf. I'm also glad to see that Max has brought back Vicki Vale. She's still a recognizable Vicki Vale, but one I think we're going to like a whole lot better than that Lois Lane rip-off we've seen so often. She's a much stronger supporting character than before, and besides Max's writing of her, Warner has also made her look much more sophisticated and therefore much more Bruce Wayne's type. I also think we're going to like the new Jason Todd. I'm very pleased. Denny, KEEP MAX COLLINS!!

My only complaint deals with the cover. No, not the art, but with the masthead. The new logo is fine (much cleaner) but get that "The New Adventures" nonsense off there. It's tacky. Besides the great art, another good thing is that we've finally got something else in the lower left-hand box other than "History of the DC Universe is Must Reading." Good grief, I was getting tired of that. It's been on your covers for the past 5 months! I think putting the credits down there is a better idea than cluttering it with house-ads.

Anyway, just thought I'd let you know how pleased I am with this "new" Batman. I like him better all the time.

Very sincerely yours,
Brian Jones
10028 Academy Knolls NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

Glad to hear you liked the issue, Brian. And you liked Bat's "Yellow Oval," eh? That leads us to our next letter...

*****

Denny,

This is my first letter to a DC comic book. I've only just started to get a few select DC titles since the revamping of SUPERMAN and BATMAN. This is not an abandonment of your marvelous competitor, but rather my insatiably voracious appetite for more comics at work. Anyway, I've been following the adventures of Batman through DARK KNIGHT, DETECTIVE COMICS and BATMAN: YEAR ONE. So far, I've gotten my money's worth.

BATMAN #408 was worth my six bits, for both story and artwork. I've enjoyed Chris Warner's work at Marvel on Doctor Strange and that goes double for his version of the Gotham Guardian. I'm unfamiliar with Max Allen Collins' work, but his script was well-paced and entertaining.

I have one complaint, though. I like the idea of Batman's annual return to Crime Alley, but it's a bit much to believe that he would walk the streets openly! If he has been doing this for the last six years, as the story mentioned, I think every hitman in Gotham City would be setting their sights on the Caped Crusader! At the very least, the press would have sent reporters and TV crews to Crime Alley. The Batman is a "creature of the night" and I think it would have been more believable if he kept to the shadows and casually picked off unsuspecting criminals. Look back at Part 3 of BATMAN: YEAR ONE and you'll see what I mean.

On a good note, I like the retelling of Jason Todd's first meeting with the Batman. I hope Jason will remain belligerent for awhile, even after he becomes the Batman's partner. It will be an interesting change from the idol-worshipping that we can usually expect from Robin.

Now, if you can just hurry up and get rid of that silly yellow circle on Batman's chest, you'll have a reader for life!

Sincerely,
Adam Schultz
420 Hamlin Avenue
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

So now it's a "silly yellow circle," eh? Mr. Schultz, meet Mr. Jones. At the sound of the bell, come out swinging...

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On a final note, let's hear it for our own Bat-eared editor, Denny O'Neil, who was recently chosen in a Comic Buyer's Guide Poll as your Favorite Editor! And if that wasn't enough good news to give you this month, guess which Pointy-eared Detective also won your hearts and votes as everyone's Favorite Character? Well, I don't want to sound overly proud, but his name is on the cover of this exceptional magazine! Thanks to all of you for your votes, and I'll see you in 30 days. So, take it away, Denny...

From the Den

Dog tired today. I was up till the small hours last night. But I'm not complaining. Seeing something like that is worth almost any amount of fatigue.

I went to the Marvin Hagler-Ray Leonard fight. Paid $35 to sit with a herd of screaming maniacs in a theater near Times Square and watch an incredible comeback on closed circuit television. By now, if you have any interest in boxing, sports or the media, you know that Sugar Ray, after having only a single fight in the past *five years*, at an age when a lot of fighters think about retiring, with a history of severe eye injury, climbed into the ring a three-to-one underdog with a determined, classy, sometimes inspired brute of an opponent and with immense style, elan and wit outboxed, outdanced and outthought his way to a victory I was hoping for, but would have bet against. Ray Leonard has given me the two best evenings I've ever had as a spectator. The first was in 1981 when, after being battered for 14 rounds, he rallied to beat Thomas Hearns by a knockout. Last night was the second.

One moment, in particular, stays with me. Ray was clowning—swinging his fist around in a caricature of a punch. Then, suddenly, the caricature changed into a genuine uppercut to the body that partially doubled Hagler over. Those with a philosophical bent might use this as an occasion to reflect on the relationship between pain and humor, between art and reality.

And here, finally, is the text of today's weary discourse.

The slow-motion replay showed that the joke-become-punch landed just an inch or so below Hagler's waistband. Technically, it was illegal—not intentionally, and certainly not enough to affect the bout's final result. But it did mar the purity of the moment ever so slightly.

In a story, the punch would have landed an inch *above* Hagler's belt. The moment would have been crystalline, unsullied.

That's one of the things stories do: give us unsullied moments.

Hope you enjoyed this issue.

DENNY